



Keep Food and Water Safe After Hurricane Katrina

The flood waters are contaminated with fecal material from overflowing sewage systems. There is a risk of disease from eating or drinking anything contaminated with flood water.

Food stored in your home during and after Hurricane Katrina may not be safe to eat. Safe water for drinking, cooking, and personal hygiene includes bottled, boiled, or treated water. Monitor notices from your parish officials for specific recommendations for boiling or treating water in your area.

Identify and throw away food that may not be safe to eat.

- Throw away any food, including packaged and canned foods, which may have come in contact with flood waters.
- Throw away food that has an unusual odor, color, or texture.
- Throw away foods stored in your refrigerator or freezer during the power outages.
- Throw away canned foods that are bulging, opened, or damaged.
- Do not use contaminated water to wash dishes, brush your teeth, wash and prepare food, wash your hands, make ice, or make baby formula.
- For formula-fed infants, use ready-to-feed formula. If using ready-to-feed formula is not possible, use bottled water to prepare powdered or concentrated formula. If bottled water is not available, use boiled or treated water as recommended by your parish officials.
 - If you prepare formula with boiled water, let the formula cool before giving it to an infant.
 - Clean feeding bottles and nipples with bottled, boiled, or treated water before each use.
 - Wash your hands or use alcohol-based hand sanitizer before preparing formula or feeding an infant.

Clean and sanitize food-contact surfaces.

CDC recommends discarding wooden cutting boards, baby bottle nipples, and pacifiers if they have come into contact with contaminated flood waters. These items cannot be properly sanitized.

Clean and sanitize food-contact surfaces that did not come in contact with flood water in a four-step process:

1. Wash with soap and warm, clean water.
2. Rinse with clean water.
3. Sanitize by immersing for 1 minute in a solution of 1 teaspoon of chlorine bleach (5.25%, unscented) per gallon of clean water.
4. Allow to air dry.

Sanitation and Hygiene

Always wash your hands with soap and water that has been boiled or disinfected or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer:

- before preparing or eating food;
- after toilet use; and
- after handling articles that have come in contact with flood water or sewage.

If any open wounds are exposed to flood water, keep them as clean as possible by washing well with soap to control infection. If a wound develops redness, swelling, or drainage, seek immediate medical attention.

Keep children and pets out of flooded areas until cleanup has been completed. Pregnant women should exercise caution when entering flooded areas. When children return after cleanup, wash children's hands frequently (always before meals), and do not allow children to play with flood-water contaminated toys that have not been disinfected. You can disinfect toys using a solution of one cup of bleach in 5 gallons of water.

Adapted by the Louisiana Department of Health & Hospitals from the US Department of Health & Human Services, Centers for Disease Control & Prevention, September 15, 2005.

For more information, visit <http://www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters/floods/>

Or call the Louisiana Department of Health & Hospitals at 1-888-293-7020